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Mandatory Review
Case # NLJ 82-51
Document # 7

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JIM JONES

SUBJECT: Weekly luncheon with Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, Walt Rostow and George Christian. (General Harold Johnson also was present.)

DATE: Tuesday, September 12, 1967

Meeting convened: 1:25 PM
Meeting adjourned: 3:10 PM

The meeting convened in the West sitting room with the President asking how we arrived at the 30 targets.

McNamara said the number was originally 427. The Joint Chiefs did not recommend 77. Of the 350 which they did recommend, 320 were approved including those that were approved last week. In re-examining the 30, the Joint Chiefs recommended against 13 of the 30, including small targets such as 4 or 5 small POL's, a small tire factory and concrete works. Of the 17 remaining, some were redesignated targets. McNamara pointed out that CINPAC has been adding targets, thus the total number is increased. In summary, McNamara said 324 targets have been authorized, 262 have been struck, and 62 have not been struck, but have been authorized.

The President said the new Polish Ambassador was quite vehement when he presented his credentials to the President Tuesday morning. The President said the Polish Ambassador remarked that peace was just ready in Hanoi when the United States bombed.

Secretary Rusk replied that [redacted] he would not feel that way." Rusk said he will review this with him.

Sec 1.3 (a)(5)

McNamara said we have an adequate bank of targets for the period that lies ahead. He said probably about 18 of the targets are in the 10 mile circle of Hanoi. McNamara said General McConnell feels that we do not need to ask for any new target authorization today.

Rusk said that restrikes cause him no problem, subject to the 10 mile circle.

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McNamara pointed out "the weather has been very bad. Only a couple got into the Haiphong area." McNamara said that of those that haven't been approved yet, the Joint Chiefs would recommend 29. Of the total of 29, 18 are in the Hanoi area and 10 or 11 in the Haiphong area. Beyond that, 36 more targets for a total of 65. In the 29 targets there are 5 which even McConnell questions, McNamara said. For example, he questions Gia Lam. But McNamara said we are not ready to ask for these authorizations yet.

Rusk said he was opposed to Gia Lam "because I may have to go in there myself."

The President asked "have we just hit one of the ports authorized last week?"

McNamara said, yes - just Cam Pha. McNamara said the pilots reports indicated some extensive damage but no photo reports are in yet to establish the damage. McNamara pointed out that these damaged facilities will not stay out long because they are primarily goods rather than facilities that were bombed.

Rusk reported that his State Department briefing of the Baltimore Sun editorial board proved very successful.

The President said Ambassador Bunker asked him to spend some time with Eugene Locke. The President said he did that Monday night and the two of them went over the "Blueprint" which Locke brought back from Vietnam. The President said he asked Locke to break it down. He wants to take what has been done in Vietnam and try to point up what has genuinely happened there. The President noted that no one can carry an election if he does not show hope of victory to his people. The President said General Johnson and General Larson's appearances were helpful, but he pointed out that we need to wrap up a package for the things that have gone well and list them, along with the problems that still lie ahead. On balance, we have not been losing, the President said, and we will change it a lot more. The President said we should say that the enemy cannot hold up under this pressure.

The President then asked General Johnson to have the Joint Chiefs "search for imaginative ideas to put pressure to bring this war to a conclusion." He said he did not want them to just recommend more men or that we drop the Atom bomb. The President said he could think of those ideas. The President asked Johnson to have the Joint Chiefs come up with some new programs. He pointed out that when this Congress comes back in January they will try to bring the war to a close either by getting out or by escalating significantly. The President asked Walt Rostow to put on a chart the good items represented in the "Blueprint."

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The President then read excerpts from the "Blueprint." (Copy of this is attached.)

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The President then read further from the "Blueprint" memorandum concerning the expansion on a crash basis to maximum extent of our absorbtive capacity of river patrol boats and river assault boats; also intensifying our operation in North Vietnam in every productive way short of bringing Russia or China into the war; and building adequate provincial jails on a crash basis to screen and detain Viet Cong infrastructure, plus jails on islands to permanently hold Viet Cong infrastructure. The President said Ambassador Locke reported that some of the Viet Cong have been captured so many times and put in jail and then the Americans leave the vicinity and the Viet Cong come back in and release their prisoners. The President cited one example of a Viet Cong who was captured, blindfolded and put on the helicopter for evacuation. The captured Viet Cong reached out and fastened his seat belt with the blindfold on without any trouble. The President said that the captured Viet Cong had less trouble fastening his seatbelt blindfolded than Mrs. Johnson does with both hands and her eyes open. The President also reported that Locke said there is no

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question that we were right in changing the pacification program from AID to Westmoreland. The President said he understands Bunker and Westmoreland were sending in this "Blueprint" report for our approval.

McNamara sais that 90% of the military aspects of the "Blueprint" are already appropriated.

At this point - 2:10 p.m. - the group went into the family dining room for lunch.

The President directed George Christian and myself to prepare my notes on the report of the Vietnam election observers and have this distributed to the Members of the Cabinet.

Rusk pointed out that the Senators who attended the King Constantine lunch leaked to the press the King's remark "this is not my government."

The President said he cautioned the King not to say anything that he did not want printed. "I think they have just crucified him," the President said.

Sec 3 (a)(5)

Rusk said that our relations with India would be remarkably better overnight.

The President asked if there was anything serious to the India-China border fight.

Rusk and McNamara agreed that there was not.

The President suggested that a speech or magazine or newspaper article be written saying that if South Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, etc. have a population of about 100 million - don't match the American troop cimmitment, then they are really going to give Johnson hell.

The President then directed McNamara to have all his service people exposed as much as possible in the movies, etc. to the bond drive. The President said "we must finance this war."

The President later asked if Mansfield will be back with his U.N. plan and does Goldberg know it won't work.

Rusk said he knows our policy. Rusk pointed out that a nose count at the U.N. indicated that it just won't work.

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The President asked why don't we take a plan to the UN., then get defeated.

Rusk said that some U.S. Senators such as Morse would misinterpret this as a repudiation by the world body of the United States policy in Vietnam.

The President said John Knight wrote a pretty good article.

Rusk replied that he sat at the table with Knight when the Publishers were here last week and reported that Knight "seemed like a fellow who agrees with you but didn't want to get caught at it." Rusk said Knight felt the reporters in Vietnam were using "too much muscle and were all acting like junior Presidents."

At 2:40 p.m. General Johnson left. Johnson told the President that General Earl Wheeler was feeling fine and the doctors said he is making exceptional progress. Johnson reported Wheeler is due to be released from the hospital Wednesday, September 13, and that he probably would be calling the President for an appointment.

The President directed me to tell Marvin Watson that General Wheeler should be brought in whenever he calls.

The President then took up the Kissinger report. The President asked Rusk if he has confidence in Kissinger's trustworthiness and character; is he a dove and a critic of our policy.

Rusk said he is confident of Kissinger's trustworthiness and character and that basically Kissinger is for us.

Walt Rostow pointed out that Henry Kissinger is a good analyst and his only weakness is that "he may go a little soft when you get down to the crunch."

Concerning the peace overtures, the President asked why shouldn't we quit explaining so much and just say "we will stop bombing, if a conference is arranged and if it will lead to fruitful discussions."

The President then asked, "who is M?"

Rusk replied - Markovich, and he's not a communist. Rusk said A is a Communist.

Rusk said that he feels it is important to keep this message the same as what we said before. Otherwise, we would be charged with bad faith. Rusk also pointed out that the great tendency among the Communist nations is to get us to say something new.

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McNamara said "I do not see the need. It weakens the public appeal." McNamara pointed out that "they charged us with conditions and I think it should be unconditional."

The President asked why we couldn't agree to stop bombing if it will lead to prompt and productive discussions.

He pointed out that if they continue to fight, then we can go back after our discussions have begun, and resume our bombing policy.

McNamara said he agrees with the President.

Rusk said "It really turns on what our policy is. Are we prepared to go through with a series of talks that may not be productive. Then if the talks are not productive, you are faced with the decision of resuming the bombing. I'll go along if you want to change our policy."

The President pointed out "we did not have reciprocity when we had the bombing pause. The conditions are prompt and productive discussions to have a bombing cessation. That has more conditions than the pause."

Rusk said he does not mind leaving the sentence out. However, he knows that if we are not prepared to follow through, then we have a public record and they may make us eat our words.

Rusk said he saw Ambassador Lucet today who reported that Van Bo said he had nothing new from Hanoi, and any new peace movements would have to come elsewhere. "My guess is that we won't get very much from talks. We will be faced with the position of resuming the bombing because the other side had bad faith," Rusk said. Rusk also said that if we call it a permanent cessation, then we are faced with having to break the talks and be criticized by the world, and if we call it a pause, then the talks are off anyway.

Rusk said that unless we are willing to redesign the proposal of August 25, the issue is how the proposal will read. "If you want to impress the dives, you drop the third paragraph. If you want to protect our flank, you keep it in."

McNamara said "don't change the proposal, just drop the sentence."

Rostow proposed the compromise using the basic proposal of August 25 with the caveat of taking out what McNamara wanted out but protecting Rusk by identifying it by reference to the August 25 proposal. That way Rusk was covered and McNamara got the sentence out. Rusk and Rostow then edited the proposal as follows: "The U.S. Government sought in its proposal of August 25 -- a proposal which the DRV has in front of it -"

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Rusk and Rostow then agreed that they were both happy with this. Rusk said "this gives us the flexibility and it gives us a chance to test these fellows again. If we get into serious talks, we must get A and M out of it."

Turning to the ABM - Rusk said the principal problem would be to let some of our friends know before McNamara makes his speech.

McNamara then cited six consultations which have already been held.

The President then turned to the subject of legislation and said he thinks that McNamara should get his bills passed by the Congress before he talks about anything else, including barriers or anything. He believes that we have not flexibility until the appropriations bill is out of Congress.

The luncheon adjourned at 3:10 p.m. and Rusk, McNamara, the President then walked to the South Lawn and to the President's office.

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